

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

RSL Fiber Systems, LLC

Connecticut State Technology Extension Program

ISO Certification Gives Light to RSL Fiber Systems' Future Pathways

Client Profile:

RSL Fiber Systems (RSLFS), a subsidiary of Skyler Technologies Group, Inc., has been the sole source provider of advanced fiber optic illumination systems for the U.S. Navy since 2001. The RSLFS system is unique because light can be transmitted more than 900 feet in their proprietary fiber optic cable. Remote source lighting technology generates light in one location and then transports it to other locations. The company employs 14 people.

Situation:

RSLFS had secured a contract from Northrop Grumman which stipulated that an ISO compliant quality system had to be in place. ISO 9001 standards for a quality management system specify organizational requirements in documentation, procedures and operations. These standards are important for a business focused on demonstrating its ability to consistently provide products or services that meet customer satisfaction and applicable regulatory requirements. In light of robust growth, RSLFS made the strategic decision to standardize its quality, adapt its company philosophy and customize its infrastructure to meet business demands. To do this, they needed the assistance of a consultant. The Connecticut Development Authority connected RSLFS to the Connecticut State Technology Extension Program (CONNSTEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, when the company needed to standardize its quality management system.

Solution:

RSLFS entered into the certification process with the support of a grant awarded by the CT Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT) as part of the Small Business Incubator Program (SBIP). The grant partially funded the work of CONNSTEP ISO 9001 consultant, Dave Tufano. Tufano became a member of RSLFS' Quality Team and assisted in guiding the company towards its ISO Registration. Conformance to ISO 9001 quality assurance standards meant RSLFS had to implement increased documentation, training, procedural changes and adjustments to their operating systems. The entire company embraced the intent of ISO 9001. As Tomasi said, "When you put a quality management system in place, you need to embrace it as a company philosophy but customize it to meet the business needs."

Through the dedication of the RSLFS team, the leadership of its Production Manager, Billie Jo Mitchell, and the support of CONNSTEP, RSLFS received the ISO 9000:2008 registration for quality management systems (QMS) in less than one year. This registration covers the design, manufacture, engineering services and assembly of fiber optic based remote source lighting systems for several military applications. The registration also confirms the company's commitment to continuous process improvement through performance monitoring and timely corrective/preventative action. With CONNSTEP's assistance, ISO 9000:2008 registration has helped open new opportunities for other navy and government contracts and will be valuable as the company continues its pursuit of commercial applications.

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Results:

- * Achieved ISO 9000:2008 certification.
- * Increased sales by \$3 million.
- * Retained sales of \$10 million.
- * Increased workforce by 40 percent.
- * Retained 8 jobs.
- * Achieved a more competitive and profitable position.

Testimonial:

"CONNSTEP's consultant, Dave Tufano, supported us throughout the ISO certification process. He helped us rationalize, consolidate, and organize our quality policies and procedures. CONNSTEP continues to assist our growth; for instance, they introduced us to a critical new supplier through their vast network of manufacturing companies. We enjoy a very positive, collaborative relationship with CONNSTEP - they have become one of our advisors."

Giovanni Tomasi, CEO